

DIVERSITY: A WEAPON OF MASS CONSTRUCTION

LA-UR-04-7628

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Invited Presentation to UCSF Diversity Week

19 October 2004

Location: Univ of CA San Francisco, SF CA

Activity: Invited presentation to UCSF Student Enrichment Seminar Series

Attendees: 50

Presentation Date: 19 OCT 04

Prior LAURs: Almost identical to LAUR-03-3360, LA-UR-03-0735

Title: Diversity: A Weapon of Mass Construction

Abstract:

How is it possible that science and society have not come to a common understanding of the role of diversity in areas that deeply influence our lives - from ecologies, to politics, to the stock market? Socially we encourage diversity from at least an ethical viewpoint, if not from business argument. But, then, our organizational actions emphasize the competitive origin of performance - "hire the best", "reward the achievers", "follow the strong" - all which are fundamentally destructive of diversity. To resolve these conflicting views, we will take a journey of discovery that illustrates how the different roles of diversity in achieving higher performance are just different stages of development in complex systems. We'll discover how we can solve the hardest problems with diverse collectives - but probably not by experts. And we'll see how our innate response to stress - following the herd - may be our worst enemy in times of rapid change. Optimism for the future is found in the synergy of diversity - the ultimate weapon of mass construction.